

City Sleuth Citation

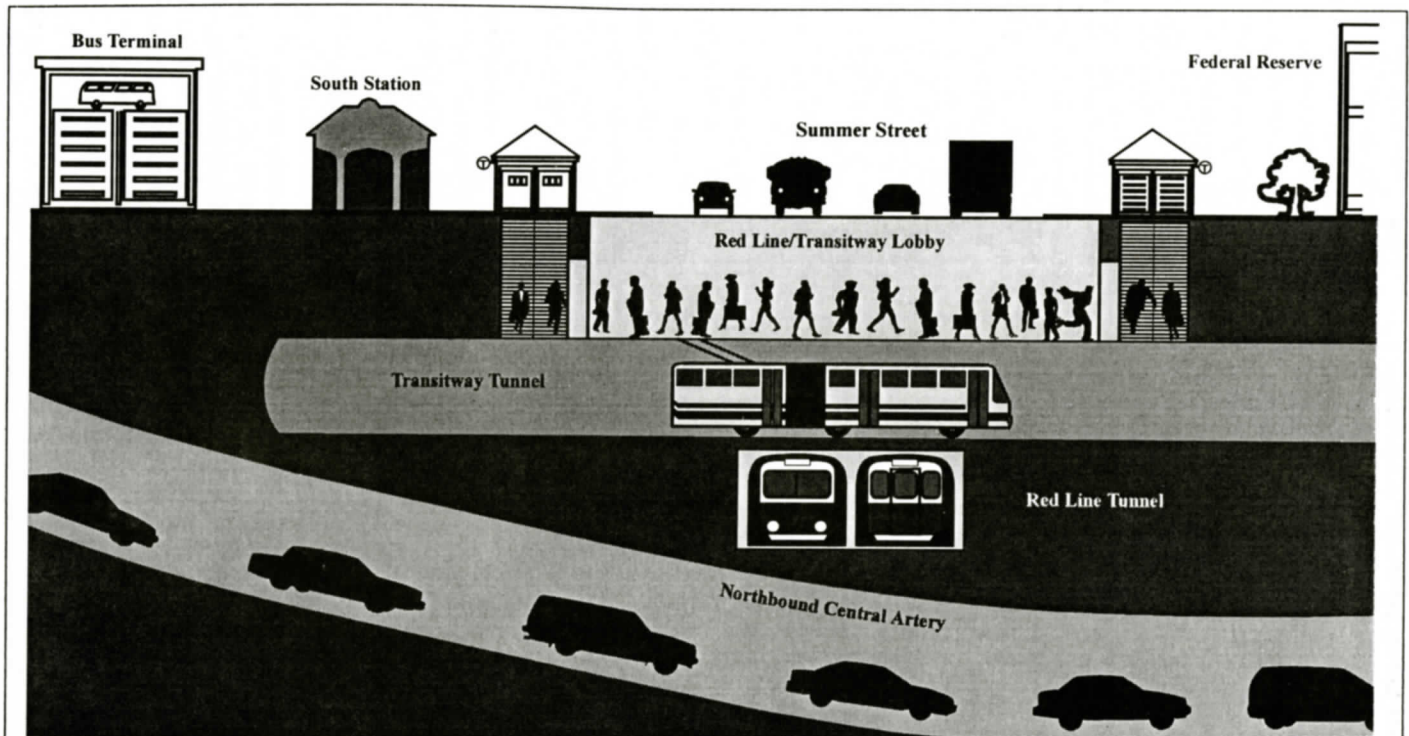
Annual awards on the landscape and cityscape

BOSTON INFORMER

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When completed (perhaps by the year 2000) South Station will truly be an "Intermodal Transportation Center," with Amtrak interstate rail, MBTA commuter rail, Red Line rapid transit, electric trolley buses in the new South Boston transitway (to the federal courthouse on the Fan Pier and to the World Trade Center), the Central Artery northbound tunnel for vehicular traffic, the bus station, a non-stop bus link to Logan Airport, and automobile and bicycle parking. Possible additions much later on include new underground platforms for the North Station-South Station Rail Link, a hotel and/or office building over the tracks and a transitway spur to Boylston station (It may be easier to get into South Station than to get out of it!). Graphic: Marci Snyder-Benson from Central Artery/Tunnel source.

Boston's new Article 80 process is a "streamlined" development-review process designed to "remove regulatory obstacles to development without compromising public review or project quality."

Approved by the Zoning Commission in April, the new zoning article, called Article 80, Development Review and Approval, has not gotten much publicity. The article integrates Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) review requirements; eliminates duplicative review procedures by "coordinating" reviews by BRA and other city and state agencies; and provides a predictable review schedule.

Article 80 creates four basic review procedures:

- **Large-Project Review** for projects over 50,000 s.f. It is based on Article 31 existing procedures, which include public comment periods and a BRA Board hearing.
- **Small-Project Review** establishes citywide standards for review of small projects and involves a staff-level review within a timeframe.
- **Planned Development Areas & Urban Renewal areas:** The new review clarifies basic requirements of zoning code and incorporates requirements previously in separate BRA regulations.
- **Institutional Master Plan Review** standardizes requirements found in various zoning articles.

Although the goal of efficiency and streamlining is noble, some have questioned how the public can get involved in reviewing any proposal that is not a large project. For information on Article 80, call Cynthia Barr at BRA/EDIC, 722-4318.

Planning for Post-Artery Depression

Boston 2000 is back! Under the auspices of Move Massachusetts 2000, Artery Business Committee (ABC), City of Boston (primarily the Boston Redevelopment Authority) and Massachusetts Highway Department, a **Boston 2000 Working Group** has been formed.

This group is charged with updating and identifying necessary and desirable changes and recommending implementation plans for the Boston 2000 plan created in 1991. This plan focused on restoration of the surface corridor after the Central Artery is depressed (some time after 2004). Task forces on Land Use and Urban Design, Development and Finance, and Disposition and Open Space Management have been set up, and a project manager hired—Rebecca Barnes of F. R. Harris (some years ago she was manager for urban design and facilities planning for the Central Artery project). A final report will be issued in May 1997.

For information call Move Mass. 2000 (695-0644), ABC (742-3333), or Rebecca Barnes (371-4459).

Upcoming Working Group Meetings (convene at offices of Hale and Dorr, 60 State St., 26th fl): September 19, October 17, November 14, and December 12 at 8:00 a.m.

People Movers

Tom O'Brien, from chief of staff, BRA/EDIC, to Fannie Mae.
Michael Travaglini, from City of Boston Retirement System to chief of staff, BRA/EDIC
Jim Gast, Central Artery/Tunnel and TAMS Consultants, to DMJM in New Orleans.
Michael Davis, Bergmeyer Associates architect named to the Boston Civic Design Commission
Betsy Thagard, Conservation Law Foundation, to California Energy Foundation
Marc Webb, Webb Assoc. and former BRA Director of Operations, to McPherson Corporation.
Pam Wessling, from MassPike, to happier ventures
Frank Tramontozzi, Boston Water and Sewer Commission and ex-BTD Commissioner, to Fay, Spofford & Thorndike.
Jeff Freudberg, from Bruce Campbell Assoc., to Louis Berger
Justine Liff, from deputy Parks Dept. commissioner to Commissioner of the Boston Parks Dept.
Pat Harrington, from Commissioner of the Boston Parks Dept. to chief operating officer, city of Boston
Thomas Tinlin, from South End Mayor's Office Liaison to Boston Transportation Dept. chief of staff
Carolyn Partan, from Massport Board to other ventures

1 Now that the private sector is making a bid to replace **Terminal A at Logan Airport**, the project may happen by 2002, faster than Massport was assuming. Although the 28-year-old Terminal A, which now houses Continental, US Air Shuttle and commuter lines, has long been scheduled for replacement, the proposal by American and British Airways could result in a dramatically different timeline. The project would cost \$200 million.

2 **New England Aquarium expansion** is finally starting. The Aquarium has received a \$25 million loan and is now set to start in early September on the first phase of its expansion plans on Central Wharf downtown. Phase I is the addition of a two-story, 17,400 s.f. wing to the front (west side) of the present building. This new construction will start just as the C14C4 Central Artery utility relocation contract is winding down.

3 **SITES TO WATCH: The Piano Block of Boylston Street**, between Tremont and Charles streets, may see change. The arrival of Emerson College at 80 Boylston St. last year may have proved to be a spark. A new development at 150 Boylston St. may be in the offing, with the BRA taking a small contiguous parcel and adding it to the development of a new residential/hotel on this 15,000 s.f. parcel. This site was originally slated for 35-45 residential units in 1988.

4 **The Motor Mart Garage complex** is being considered for a mixed-use development consisting of residential, hotel, commercial and office.

5 **The Boston Garden** is being considered Canderel Properties Ltd. for a multiple-screen theater complex and mixed-use entertainment area.

6 **Park Square:** The Boston Redevelopment Authority received two proposals for hotels for this last Park Plaza development parcel. MDA Plaza Associates L.P. and Sawyer Enterprises. The site also contains a small building owned by the Saunders family and a parking lot privately owned by Sawyer Enterprises.

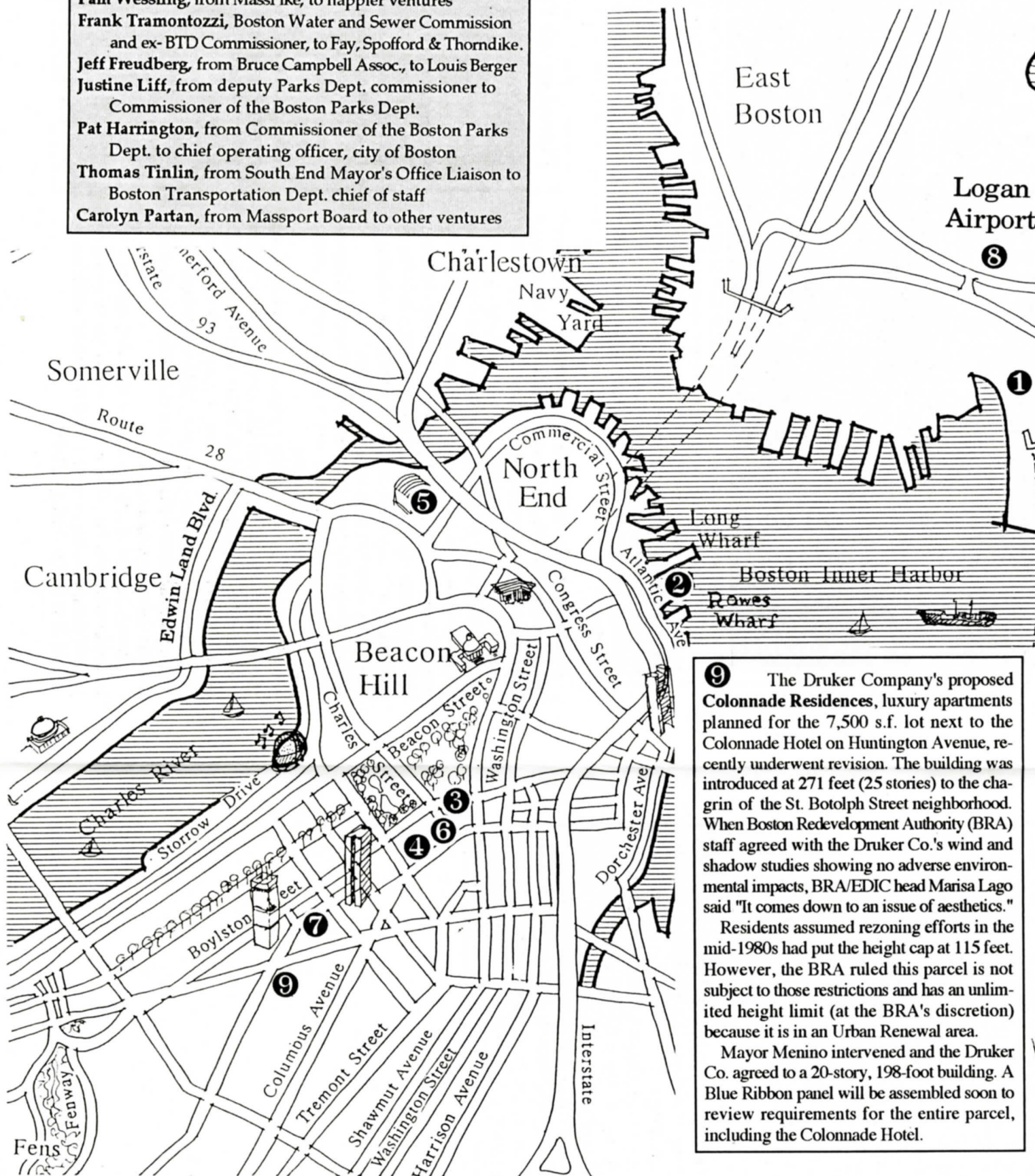
7 A proposal by the Raymond Property Co. to redevelop **25 Huntington Ave.** as commercial and residential is currently going through the city's project impact report process.

8 Massport has filed the **1994-5 Logan Airport Generic Environmental Impact Report (GEIR) Updates** (five volumes). Part of the GEIR includes Logan environmental policy and some analysis of regional planning questions, including regional review and the role of Logan Airport, its relation to high-speed rail, Central Artery/Tunnel project, high-occupancy vehicles, regional airports, etc. Copies may be obtained from VHB (924-1770). Comments are due by Sept. 24, 1996.

9 The Druker Company's proposed **Colonnade Residences**, luxury apartments planned for the 7,500 s.f. lot next to the Colonnade Hotel on Huntington Avenue, recently underwent revision. The building was introduced at 271 feet (25 stories) to the chagrin of the St. Botolph Street neighborhood. When Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) staff agreed with the Druker Co.'s wind and shadow studies showing no adverse environmental impacts, BRA/EDIC head Marisa Lago said "It comes down to an issue of aesthetics."

Residents assumed rezoning efforts in the mid-1980s had put the height cap at 115 feet. However, the BRA ruled this parcel is not subject to those restrictions and has an unlimited height limit (at the BRA's discretion) because it is in an Urban Renewal area.

Mayor Menino intervened and the Druker Co. agreed to a 20-story, 198-foot building. A Blue Ribbon panel will be assembled soon to review requirements for the entire parcel, including the Colonnade Hotel.



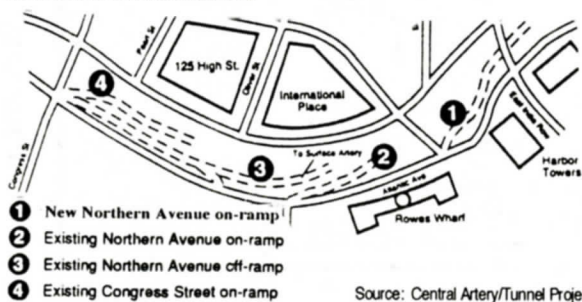
Turmoil at the Turnpike...No, not a new soap opera, but our very own MassPike. On July 1, Dukakis-appointed MassPike chair Alan McKinnon's term ended and Gov. Weld appointed Transportation Secretary James Kerasiotes to succeed him (as a second job). This gave Gov. Weld control of the three-person MassPike Board.

- In a whirlwind of activity, the new Board
- demoted vice chair Ann Hershfang (the lone Dukakis appointee) and elevated Thomas Curley Jr. to vice chair;
 - removed tolls from the last four exits (1-4);
 - suspended, pending review, all new planned work on the remaining \$200 million of \$500 million highway improvement program;
 - raised the speed limit to 65 m.p.h. for the entire MassPike west of Route 128;
 - fired several management employees (see People Movers) and radically reduced employee benefits;
 - brought former governor Ed King out of retirement in Florida to oversee (unpaid) development of MassPike real estate holdings and air rights. They hope to raise new money to allow more toll reductions and for its contribution to Big Dig costs. (Former governor Michael Dukakis, who both was beaten by and beat Ed King in governor's races, commented, "their next step is to bring back Barry Locke"!)

The New Northern Avenue on-ramp, a "temporary" ramp to the Central Artery by Harbor Towers and Rows Wharf, finally opened on Thursday, August 29. The old on-ramp near the Northern Avenue Bridge will be demolished to allow utility relocation in the area. Access is from northbound on Atlantic Avenue only.

Originally, Central Artery/Tunnel planners were convinced the old Northern Avenue on-ramp could be closed and not replaced, with traffic instead using the Congress Street on-ramp and Atlantic Avenue. After re-checking the numbers, they discovered that Atlantic Avenue would become severely congested in peak hours. Construction was supposed to start in January 1994.

Later this fall, the old Northern Avenue Bridge will at last be closed, ending a 20-year saga of building a new fixed-span bridge. The new Northern Avenue Bridge will then be opened to two-way traffic (it currently is open to eastbound traffic only). The fate of the old bridge is still to be determined.



Gems from the Transportation Bond Bill: From "An Act Providing for an Accelerated Transportation Development and Improvement Program for the Commonwealth" aka, the Transportation Bond Bill, the following were noted:

- \$1 m for design and construction of a park on Massachusetts Avenue between Shawmut Avenue and Tremont Street;
- \$1.5 m for widening the Massachusetts Avenue bridge over the MassPike for a bus pullout and pedestrian amenities;
- \$7 m for Kenmore Square pedestrian, street, and maybe busway improvements;
- \$50,000 for a study of a commuter rail stop in Allston-Brighton;
- Gives the BRA/BTD until Jan. 1, 1997, to submit report on Back Bay MassPike ramps;
- Requires the MBTA to restore the Blue Line guards and submit a report on safety
- Directs MHD to implement a new plan broadening the use of the Southeast Expressway carpool lane using a license-plate eligibility system.

Source: Central Artery/Tunnel Project

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

The *Boston Informer* is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The *Boston Informer* is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-3584.



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Your city at work—Making a parking lot out of a vacant lot!

THE BOSTON INFORMER

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You were asking...

Q. What is the Green Ribbon Commission?

A. Commissioned by Gov. Weld in 1995, the Green Ribbon Commission was charged with determining the best ways to preserve the MDC park system's natural resources. It reported that the park system is in danger due to inadequate state funding, a weak management structure, and a poor commitment to stewardship. Incidentally, the report forgot to mention former MDC Commissioner Illyas Bhatti.... For copies of "Enhancing the Future of the Metropolitan Park System," call the MDC at 727-1300 or pick one up at the MDC, 20 Somerset St., Boston.

Q. Doesn't Boston have a Parking Freeze?

A. The Air Pollution Control Commission (APCC), part of Boston's Environment Department, regulates public parking in accordance with the 1976 Downtown Boston Parking Freeze which fixed the number of parking spaces at 35,503. It is unclear how APCC justifies some permits, since many lots have been approved despite failing to meet criteria, such as being distant from transit or parking. The Conservation Law Foundation is suing APCC, saying it violated its criteria when it issued a permit for a parking lot in the Combat Zone. Meanwhile, there are only about 400 spaces left to be used for worthwhile parking lots.

Q. I heard the MBTA is proposing dual-mode trains instead of electric trains in the No. Station-So. Station Rail Link. Why?

A. Because it would cut almost \$2 billion out of the \$4 billion project by not electrifying the system. However, this is likely to be a false economy since electrification is required for Amtrak high-speed trains and efficient commuter trains (much faster acceleration and deceleration between stops, air quality, etc.). Electrified trains are standard in developed countries worldwide.